

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING KOREAN AMERICAN DAY

HON. MIKE KELLY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 28, 2016

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, one hundred thirteen years ago this month, pioneers from Korea first journeyed to our shores in search of opportunity, prosperity, and freedom. These early Korean Americans worked hard in our growing country, started families, and established strong communities. Over the past century, Korean Americans have made strong contributions to our fields of medicine, engineering, research, and innovation, and have become respected community leaders and elected officials.

The United States shares a special relationship with the Republic of Korea forged during the Korean War and solidified by the greater global struggle for freedom in the 20th century. In response to the invasion of North Korea and communist forces in 1950, the United States led a global coalition to defend Korean sovereignty. Millions of American and Korean soldiers fought side by side and formed friendships during the conflict. Guided by desire to foster trust and mutual cooperation in the region, the U.S.-Korea alliance has stabilized a region subjected to terror by North Korea.

Last November, I had the privilege of visiting the Republic. Over the course of my three-day visit, I enjoyed robust policy discussions with Korean leaders on numerous topics, deepening old friendships while forging new ones. It was evident to me that the U.S.-Korea alliance has never been stronger. The U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS) has brought economic growth to both of our countries, and American exports to Korea reached a record level last year. As I continue to reflect on my visit to the Republic, I am reminded of the deep and abiding responsibility all American leaders should feel towards preserving the U.S.-Korea alliance. The vigor and vitality of the Korean people and their commitment to democracy, a free market economy, and the rule of law—our common values—is simply inspirational. We owe that commitment to our esteemed Korean War veterans—the 1.8 million Americans who fought and sacrificed so much in that awful conflict to help birth one of the greatest democracies and alliances in the history of civilization.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate Korean American Day. As the co-chairman of the Congressional Caucus on Korea, I am proud to recognize our nations' special relationship and the powerful contributions that Korean Americans have made to the United States, especially those who have served with distinction in our Armed Forces. In the years to come, the U.S.-Korea alliance will surely be tested but our faith and determination will never falter or waiver.

TRIBUTE TO LAUREN SMITH

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 28, 2016

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, we rise today to honor the life of Lauren Suzanne Smith. I am joined by my esteemed colleagues DORIS O. MATSUI, JERRY MCNERNEY, ZOE LOFGREN, AMI BERA, JULIA BROWNLEY, LOIS CAPPS, TONY CÁRDENAS, JUDY CHU, JIM COSTA, SUSAN A. DAVIS, MARK DESAULNIER, ANNA ESHOO, SAM FARR, JOHN GARAMENDI, JANICE HAHN, BARBARA LEE, TED LIEU, ALAN S. LOWENTHAL, GRACE F. NAPOLITANO, LINDA SÁNCHEZ, ADAM B. SCHIFF, BRAD SHERMAN, JACKIE SPEIER, ERIC SWALWELL, MARK TAKANO, MIKE THOMPSON, NORMA J. TORRES, JUAN VARGAS, and MAXINE WATERS.

Lauren Smith, a beloved daughter, sister, friend, Congressional staffer, and coworker, died on December 26, 2015 in her home in Washington, D.C. at the age of 37.

Lauren was born on August 18, 1978, in Illinois. At the age of four, she attended her first Chicago White Sox baseball game—thus launching a lifelong love of the sport. Lauren was also a professional ballroom dancer and instructor. A self-proclaimed “foodie,” Lauren was an inspirational chef, who had her own website: “One if By Food.” She believed people should not have to compromise taste, flavor, and health—just because they were only cooking for one.

Lauren thrived on following her passions, despite the sacrifices. That characteristic fueled her journey across the country multiple times, from the campaign trail to Capitol Hill. Her unabating dedication to progressive ideals was second only to her independent spirit. Her keen communications skills and doggedness served her well, bringing exciting opportunities and necessitating many a quick decision to say “yes” to pack up everything to go on to the next challenge.

Lauren got her feet wet fresh from graduating from Cal State Fullerton with the All America PAC during the 2006 midterm elections, and worked her way up to become the Democratic National Committee's statewide communications director for Indiana during the 2008 presidential election. Lauren proved herself time and again, handling tough situations and high pressure through a decade on the Hill as Press Secretary for Rep. CUELLAR (D-Texas), Communications Director for Rep. MATSUI (D-Calif.), and Communications Director/Deputy Chief of Staff for Rep. MCNERNEY (D-Calif.). After serving as Communications Consultant for John Walsh's bid for Montana's vacant Senate seat, Lauren served as the Deputy Communications Director for Sen. Walsh (D-Mont.) as well.

In 2015, Lauren joined Rep. HONDA's (D-Calif.) team. Lauren swiftly settled in, becoming a major asset to the entire staff—teaming with each staff member to increase effectiveness of all communication. She thoughtfully

served as the Member's voice and ambassador to the media. Lauren was a media liaison extraordinaire, easily developing positive professional relationships with reporters.

Lauren loved her job, and everyone knew it from her positive impact. Lauren changed the lives of everyone with whom she worked. A common denominator for all the offices where Lauren worked is that Lauren was viewed as dedicated, passionate, incredibly hard-working, and most of all, beloved. She would brighten up any office with her quick wit and cheery nature. She was also deeply caring and considerate. She was the first to ask how someone was doing and offer assistance. To her, relationships mattered most of all. Lauren always put herself last.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes, we are simply lucky enough to be gifted with an amazing employee and colleague. Lauren had an infectious laugh, and an inspiring spirit that matched her drive to make the world a better and happier place. No doubt, Lauren is still giggling somewhere, and looking out for her loved ones. Lauren—you are beyond compare. You made it so easy to fall into love with you. We miss you so very dearly.

RECOGNIZING THE 26TH ANNIVERSARY OF “BLACK JANUARY”

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 28, 2016

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 26th anniversary of “Black January” in Azerbaijan. Imbedded in the memory of all Azerbaijanis regardless of where they live, Black January commemorates Azerbaijan's stand against Soviet soldiers for independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity over all lands under Azerbaijani jurisdiction, and freedom from communism and dictatorship.

On the evening of January 19, 1990, the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet Presidium backed by then-President Mikhail Gorbachev, declared a state of emergency in response to the growing national independence movement in Azerbaijan, which led to Russian troops storming the Azerbaijani capital city of Baku. In an attempt to suppress the movement and “restore order,” Soviet invaders indiscriminately fired on peaceful demonstrators, including women and children. That night, more than 130 people died, over 700 people were injured, 841 were arrested and 5 went missing.

The invasion, however, focused not just on peaceful protestors but also on critical infrastructure and workers. According to a report by Human Rights Watch entitled Black January in Azerbaijan, “among the most heinous violations of human rights during the Baku incursion were the numerous attacks on medical personnel, ambulances and even hospitals.” Additionally, the attack was an act of intimidation for all then-Soviet countries with independence ambitions. The Human Rights

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